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THE VISION OF JUDGMENT,

BY QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS.

SUGGESTED BY THE COMPOSITION SO ENTITLED BY THE AUTHOR
OF "WAT TYLER."

"A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word."

PREFACE.

It hath been wisely said, that "One fool makes many;" and it hath been poetically observed,

That fools rush in where angels fear to tread." POPE.

If Mr. Southey had not rushed in where he had no business, and where he never was before, and never will be again, the following poem would not have been written. It is not impossible that it may be as good as his own, seeing that it cannot, by any species of stupidity, natural or acquired, be *worse*. The gross flattery, the dull impudence, the renegado intolerance and impious cant of the poem by the author of Wat Tyler, are something so stupenduous as to form the sublime of himself—containing the quintessence of his own attributes.

So much for his poem—a word on his preface. In this preface it has pleased the magnanimous Laureate to draw the picture of a supposed "Satanic School," the which he doth recommend to the notice of the legislature, thereby adding to his other laurels the ambition of those of an informer. If there exists any where, excepting in his imagination, such a school, is he not sufficiently armed against it by his own intense vanity? The truth is, that there are certain writers whom Mr. S. imagines, like Scrub, to have "talked of *him*;" for they laughed consumedly.

I think I know enough of most of the writers to whom he is supposed to allude, to assert, that they, in their individual capacities, have done more good in the charities of life to their fellow

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creatures in any one year, than Mr. Southey has done harm to himself by his absurdities in his whole life; and this is saying a great deal. But I have a few questions to ask.

1stly. Is Mr. Southey the author of *Wat Tyler*?

2ndly. Was he not refused a remedy at law by the highest Judge of his beloved England, because it was a blasphemous and seditious publication?

3dly. Was he not entitled by William Smith, in full Parliament, "a rancorous Renegade?"

4thly. Is he not Poet Laureate, with his own lines on Martin the Regicide staring him in the face?

And, 5thly. Putting the four preceding items together, with what conscience dare *he* call the attention of the laws to the publications of others be they what they may?

I say nothing of the cowardice of such a proceeding; its meanness speaks for itself, but I wish to touch upon the *motive*, which is neither more nor less, than that Mr. S. has been laughed at a little in some recent publications, as he was of yore in the "*Anti-jacobin*" by his present patrons. Hence all this "skimble scamble stuff" about "*Satanic*," and so forth. However, it is worthy of him—" *Qualis ab incepto.*"

If there is any thing obnoxious to the political opinions of a portion of the public, in the following poem, they may thank Mr. Southey. He might have written hexameters, as he has written every thing else, for aught that the writer cared—had they been upon another subject. But to attempt to canonize a Monarch, who, whatever were his household virtues, was neither a successful nor a patriot king,—inasmuch as several years of his reign passed in war with America and Ireland, to say nothing of the aggression upon France,—like all other exaggeration, necessarily begets opposition. In whatever manner he may be spoken of in this new "*Vision*," his *public* career will not be more favourably transmitted by history. Of his private virtues (although a little expensive to the nation) there can be no doubt.

With regard to the supernatural personages treated of, I can only say that I know as much about them, and (as an honest man) have a better right to talk of them than Robert Southey. I have also treated them more tolerantly. The way in which that poor insane creature, the Laureate, deals about his judgments in the next world, is like his own judgment in this. If it was not completely ludicrous, it would be something worse. I don't think that there is much more to say at present.

QUEVEDO REDIVIVUS.

P. S.—It is possible that some readers may object, in these objectionable times, to the freedom with which saints, angels, and spiritual persons, discourse in this "*Vision*." But for precedents upon such points I must refer him to Fielding's "*Journey from this*

World to the next," and to the Visions of myself, the said Quevedo, in Spanish or translated. The reader is also requested to observe, that no doctrinal tenets are insisted upon or discussed; that the person of the Deity is carefully withheld from sight, which is more than can be said for the Laureate, who hath thought proper to make him talk, not "like a school divine," but like the unscholarlike Mr. Southey. The whole action passes on the outside of heaven; and Chaucer's Wife of Bath, Pulci's Morgante Maggiore, Swift's Tale of a Tub, and the other works above referred to, are cases in point of the freedom with which saints, &c., may be permitted to converse in works not intended to be serious.

Q. R.

[* Mr. Southey, being, as he says, a good Christian and vindictive, threatens, I understand, a reply to this our answer. It is to be hoped that his visionary faculties will in the mean time have acquired a little more judgment, properly so called: otherwise he will get himself into new dilemmas. These apostate jacobins furnish rich rejoinders. Let him take a specimen. Mr. Southey laudeth grievously "one Mr. Landor," who cultivates much private renown in the shape of Latin verses; and not long ago, the Poet Laureate dedicated to him, it appeareth, one of his fugitive lyrics, upon the strength of a poem called *Gebir*. Who would suppose, that in this same *Gebir*, the aforesaid Savage Landor (for such is his grim cognomen) putteth into the infernal regions no less a person than the hero of his friend Mr. Southey's heaven,—yea, even George the Third! See also how personal Savage becometh, when he hath a mind. The following is his portrait of our late gracious Sovereign:—

Prince Gebir having descended into the infernal regions, the shades of his royal ancestors are, at his request, called up to his view, and he exclaims to his ghostly guide)—

"Aroar, what wretch that nearest us? what wretch

Is that with eyebrows white and slanting brow?

Listen! him yonder, who, bound down supine,

Shrinks yelling from that sword there, engine-hung.

He too amongst my ancestors! I hate

The despot, but the dastard I despise.

Was he our countryman?"

"Alas, O King!

Iberia bore him, but the breed accurst

Inclement winds blew blighting from north-east."

"He was a warrior then, nor fear'd the gods?"

Gebir, he fear'd the Demons, not the Gods,

Though them indeed his daily face ador'd;

And was no warrior, yet the thousand lives

Squander'd, as stones to exercise a sling!

And the tame cruelty and cold caprice—

Oh madness of mankind! address, adored?"—*Gebir*, p. 28.

I omit noticing some edifying Ithyphallics of Savagius, wishing to keep the proper veil over them, if his grave but somewhat indiscreet worshipper will suffer it; but certainly these teachers of "great moral lessons" are apt to be found in strange company.]

THE
VISION OF JUDGMENT.



Sr. Peter sat by the celestial gate,
His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull,
So little trouble had been given of late;
Not that the place by any means was full,
But since the Gallic era "eighty-eight,"
The Devils have ta'en a longer, stronger pull,
And "a pull altogether," as they say
At sea—which drew most souls another way.

The angels all were singing out of tune,
And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,
Or curb a runaway young star or two,
Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon
Broke out of bounds o'er the ethereal blue,
Splitting some planet with its playful tail,
As boats are sometimes by a wanton whale.

The guardian seraphs had retired on high,
Finding their charges past all care below;
Terrestrial business fill'd nought in the sky
Save the recording angel's black bureau;
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply
With such rapidity of vice and woe,
That he had stripp'd off both his wings in quills,
And yet was in arrear of human ills.

His business so augmented of late years,
That he was forced, against his will, no doubt,
(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers,)
For some resource to turn himself about,
And claim the help of his celestial peers,
To aid him ere he should be quite worn out
By the increased demand for his remarks;
Six angels and twelve saints were named his clerks.

This was a handsome board—at least for heaven;
And yet they had even then enough to do,
So many conquerers' cars were daily driven,
So many kingdoms fitted up anew;
Each day too slew its thousands six or seven,
Till at the crowning carnage, Waterloo,
They threw their pens down in divine disgust—
The page was so besmeared with blood and dust.

This by the way ; 'tis not mine to record
 What angels shrink from : even the very devil
 On this occasion his own work abhorr'd,
 So surfeited with the infernal revel ;
 Though he himself had sharpen'd every sword,
 It almost quenched his innate thirst of evil.
 (Here Satan's sole good work deserves insertion—
 'Tis, that he has both generals in reversion.)

Let's skip a few short years of hollow peace,
 Which peopled earth no better, hell as wont,
 And heaven none—they form the tyrant's lease
 With nothing but new names subscribed upon't ;
 'Twill one day finish : meantime they increase,
 " With seven heads and ten horns," and all in front,
 Like Saint John's foretold beast ; but ours are born
 Less formidable in the head than horn.

In the first year of freedom's second dawn
 Died George the Third ; although no tyrant, one
 Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
 Left him nor mental nor external sun :
 A better farmer ne'er brush'd dew from lawn,
 A worse king never left a realm undone !
 He died—but left his subjects still behind,
 One half as mad—and t'other no less blind.

He died !—his death made no great stir on earth ;
 His burial made some pomp ; there was profusion
 Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth
 Of aught but tears—save those shed by collusion ;
 For these things may be bought at their true worth :
 Of elegy there was the due infusion—
 Bought also ; and the torches, cloaks, and banners,
 Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

Form'd a sepulchral melo-drame. Of all
 The fools who flock'd to swell or see the show,
 Who cared about the corpse ? The funeral
 Made the attraction, and the black the woe.
 There throbb'd not there a thought which pierced the pall ;
 And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,
 It seem'd the mockery of hell to fold
 The rottenness of eighty years in gold.

So mix his body with the dust ! It might
 Return to what it *must* far sooner, were
 The natural compound left alone to fight
 Its way back into earth, and fire, and air ;
 But the unnatural balsams merely blight
 What nature made him at his birth, as bare
 As the mere million's base unummied clay—
 Yet all his spices but prolong decay.

He's dead—and upper earth with him has done :
 He's buried ; save the undertaker's bill,
 Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
 For him, unless he left a German will ;
 But where's the proctor who will ask his son ?
 In whom his qualities are reigning still,
 Except that household virtue, most uncommon,
 Of constancy to a bad, ugly woman.

“ God save the king ! ” It is a large economy
 In God to save the like ; but if he will
 Be saving, all the better ; for not one am I
 Of those who think damnation better still :
 I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
 In this small hope of bettering future ill
 By circumscribing, with some slight restriction,
 The eternity of hell's hot jurisdiction.

I know this is unpopular ; I know
 'Tis blasphemous ; I know one may be damn'd
 For hoping no one else may e'er be so ;
 I know my catechism ; I know we are cramm'd
 With the best doctrines till we quite o'erflow ;
 I know that all save England's church have sham'd,
 And that the other twice two hundred churches
 And synagogues have made a *damn'd* bad purchase.

God help us all ! God help me too ! I am,
 God knows, as helpless as the devil can wish,
 And not a whit more difficult to damn
 Than is to bring to land a late-hook'd fish,
 Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb ;
 Not that I'm fit for such a noble dish
 As one day will be that immortal fry
 Of almost every body born to die.

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,
 And nodded o'er his keys ; when lo ! there came
 A wond'rous noise he had not heard of late—
 A rushing sound of wind, and stream, and flame ;
 In short, a roar of things extremely great,
 Which would have made aught save a saint exclaim ;
 But he, with first a start and then a wink,
 Said, “ There's another star gone out, I think ! ”

But ere he could return to his repose,
 A cherub flapp'd his right wing o'er his eyes—
 At which St. Peter yawn'd, and rubb'd his nose :
 “ Saint porter,” said the Angel, “ prithee rise ! ”
 Waving a goodly wing, which glow'd, as glows
 An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly dyes ;
 To which the Saint replied, “ Well, what's the matter ?
 “ Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter ? ”

"No," quoth the Cherub; George the third is dead."
 "And who is George the Third?" replied the Apostle;
 "What George? what Third?" "The King of England," said
 The Angel. "Well! he wont find kings to jostle
 Him on his way; but does he wear his head?"
 "Because the last we saw here had a tussle,
 And ne'er would have got into heaven's good graces,
 Had he not flung his head in all our faces."

"He was, if I remember, king of France:
 "That head of his, which could not keep a crown
 On earth, yet ventured in my face to advance
 A claim to those of martyrs—like my own:
 If I had had my sword, as I had once
 When I cut ears off, I had cut him down;
 But having but my *keys*, and not my brand,
 I only knock'd his head from out his hand."

"And then he set up such a headless howl,
 That all the saints came out, and took him in;
 And there he sits by St. Paul, cheek by jowl;
 That fellow Paul—the parvenú! The skin
 Of Saint Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
 In heaven, and upon earth redeem'd his sin
 So as to make a martyr, never sped
 Better than did this weak and wooden head."

"But had it come up here upon his shoulders,
 There would have been a different tale to tell:
 The fellow feeling in the saints beholders
 Seems to have acted on them like a spell,
 And so this very foolish head heaven solders
 Back on its trunk: it may be very well,
 And seems the custom here to overthrow
 Whatever has been wisely done below."

The Angel answer'd, "Peter! do not pout;
 The king who comes has head and all entire,
 And never knew much what it was about—
 He did as doth the puppet—by its wire,
 And will be judged like all the rest, no doubt:
 My business and your own is not to enquire
 Into such matters, but to mind our cue—
 Which is to act as we are bid to do."

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
 Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
 Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
 Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile, or Inde,
 Or Thames, or Tweed) and midst them an old man
 With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
 Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
 Seated their fellow-traveller on a cloud.

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
 A Spirit of a different aspect waved
 His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
 Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved ;
 His brow was like the deep when tempest-tost ;
 Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
 Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
 And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
 Ne'er to be enter'd more by him or sin,
 With such a glance of supernatural hate,
 As made Saint Peter wish himself within ;
 He potter'd with his keys at a great rate,
 And sweated through his apostolic skin :
 Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
 Or some such other spiritual liquor.

The very cherubs huddled altogether,
 Like birds when soars the falcon ; and they felt
 A tingling to the tip of every feather,
 And form'd a circle like Orion's belt
 Around their poor old charge ; who scarce knew whither
 His guards had led him, though they gently dealt
 With royal manes (for by many stories,
 And true, we learn the angels all are Tories.)

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
 Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges
 Flung over space an universal hue
 Of many-coloured flame, until its tinges
 Reach'd even our speck of earth, and made a new
 Aurora borealis spread its fringes
 O'er the North Pole ; the same seen, when ice-bound,
 By Captain Parry's crews, in " Melville's Sound."

And from the gate thrown open issued beaming
 A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
 Radiant with glory, like a banner streaming
 Victorious from some world-o'erthrowing fight :
 My poor comparisons must needs be teeming
 With earthly likenesses, for here the night
 Of clay obscures our best conceptions, saving
 Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey raving.

Twas the archangel Michael : all men know
 The make of angels and archangels, since
 There's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
 From the fiends' leader to the angels' prince.
 There also are some altar-pieces, though
 I really can't say that they much evince
 One's inner notions of immortal spirits ;
 But let the connoisseurs explain their merits.

Michael flew forth in glory and in good ;
 A goodly work of him from whom all glory
 And good arise ; the portal past—he stood ;
 Before him the young cherubs and saint hoary,
 (I say *young*, begging to be understood
 By looks, not years ; and should be very sorry
 To state, they were not older than Saint Peter,
 But merely that they seem'd a little sweeter.)

The cherubs and the saints bow'd down before
 That arch-angelic Hierarch, the first
 Of Essences angelical, who wore
 The aspect of a god ; but this ne'er nurst
 Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose core
 No thought, save for his Maker's service, durst
 Intrude, however glorified and high ;
 He knew him but the viceroy of the sky.

He and the sombre silent Spirit met—
 They knew each other both for good and ill ;
 Such was their power, that neither could forget
 His former friend and future foe ; but still
 There was a high, immortal, proud regret
 In either's eye, as if 'twere less their will
 Than destiny to make the eternal years
 Their date of war, and their " Champ Clos" the spheres.

But here they were in neutral space : we know
 From Job, that Sathan hath the power to pay
 A heavenly visit thrice a year or so ;
 And that " the Sons of God," like those of clay,
 Must keep him company ; and we might show,
 From the same book, in how polite a way
 The dialogue is held between the Powers
 Of Good and Evil—but 'twould take up hours.

And this is not a theologic tract,
 To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic
 If Job be allegory or a fact,
 But a true narrative ; and thus I pick
 From out the whole but such and such an act
 As sets aside the slightest thought of trick.
 'Tis every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
 And accurate as any other vision.

The spirits were in neutral space, before
 The gate of heaven ; like eastern thresholds is
 The place where Death's grand cause is argued o'er,
 And souls despatched to that world or to this ;
 And therefore Michael and the other wore
 A civil aspect : though they did not kiss,
 Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
 There passed a mutual glance of great politeness.

The Archangel bowed, not like a modern beau,
 But with a graceful Oriental bend,
 Pressing one radiant arm just where below
 The heart in good men is supposed to tend,
 He turned as to an equal, not too low,
 But kindly; Sathan met his ancient friend
 With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
 Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

He merely bent his diabolic brow
 An instant; and then raising it, he stood
 In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
 Cause why King George by no means could or should
 Make out a case to be exempt from woe
 Eternal, more than other kings endued
 With better sense and hearts, whom history mentions,
 Who long have "paved hell with their good intentions."

Michael began: "What wouldst thou with this man,
 "Now dead, and brought before the Lord? What ill
 "Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
 "That thou can'st claim him? Speak! and do thy will,
 "If it be just: if in this earthly span
 "He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
 "His duties as a king and mortal, say,
 "And he is thine; if not, let him have way."

"Michael!" replied the Prince of Air, "even here,
 "Before the gate of him thou servest, must
 "I claim my subject; and will make appear
 "That as he was my worshipper in dust,
 "So shall he be in spirit, although dear
 "To thee and thine, because nor wine nor lust
 "Were of his weaknesses; yet on the throne
 "He reign'd o'er millions to serve me alone.

"Look to *our* earth, or rather *mine*; it was,
 "Once, more thy master's: but I triumph not
 "In this poor planet's conquest, nor, alas!
 "Need he thou servest envy me my lot:
 "With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
 "In worship round him, he may have forgot
 "Yon weak creation of such paltry things;
 "I think few worth damnation save their kings,

"And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
 "Assert my right as lord; and even had
 "I such an inclination, 'twere (as you
 "Well know) superfluous; they are grown so bad,
 "That hell has nothing better left to do
 "Than leave them to themselves: so much more mad
 "And evil by their own internal curse,
 "Heaven cannot make them better, nor I worse.

" Look to the earth, I said, and say again :
 " When this old, blind, mad, helpless, weak, poor worm,
 " Began in youth's first bloom and flush to reign,
 " The world and he both wore a different form,
 " And much of earth and all the watery plain
 " Of ocean call'd him king: through many a storm
 " His isles had floated on the abyss of Time;
 " For the rough virtues chose them for their clime.

" He came to his sceptre, young; he leaves it, old:
 " Look to the state in which he found his realm,
 " And left it; and his annals too behold,
 " How to a minion first he gave the helm;
 " How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
 " The beggar's vice, which can but overwhelm
 " The meanest hearts; and for the rest, but glance
 " Thine eye along America and France!

" 'Tis true, he was a tool from first to last;
 " (I have the workmen safe); but as a tool
 " So let him be consumed! From out the past
 " Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
 " Of monarchs—from the bloody rolls amass'd
 " Of sin and slaughter—from the Cæsar's school,
 " Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
 " More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd with the slain!

" He ever warr'd with freedom and the free:
 " Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
 " So that they utter'd the word ' Liberty!'
 " Found George the Third their first opponent. Whose
 " History was ever stain'd as his will be
 " With national and individual woes?
 " I grant his household abstinence; I grant
 " His neutral virtues, which most monarchs want;

" I know he was a constant consort; own
 " He was a decent sire, and middling lord.
 " All this is much, and most upon a throne;
 " As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
 " Is more than at an anchorite's supper shown.
 " I grant him all the kindest can accord;
 " And this was well for him, but not for those
 " Millions who found him what oppression chose.

" The new world shook him off; the old yet groans
 " Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
 " Completed: he leaves heirs on many thrones
 " To all his vices, without what begot
 " Compassion for him—his tame virtues; drones
 " Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
 " A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
 " Upon the throne of Earth; but let them quake!

" Five millions of the primitive, who hold
 " The faith which makes ye great on earth, implored
 " A part of that vast *all* they held of old,—
 " Freedom to worship—not alone your Lord,
 " Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter! Cold
 " Must be your souls, if you have not abhorrd
 " The foe to Catholic participation
 " In all the licence of a Christian nation.

" True! he allow'd them to pray God; but as
 " A consequence of prayer, refused the law
 " Which would have placed them upon the same base
 " With those who did not hold the saints in awe."
 But here Saint Peter started from his place,
 And cried, " You may the prisoner withdraw :
 " Ere Heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelf,
 " While I am guard, may I be damn'd myself !

" Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
 " My office (and *his* is no sinecure)
 " Than see this royal Bedlam bigot range
 " The azure fields of heaven, of that be sure!"
 " Saint!" replied Sathan, " you do well to avenge
 " The wrongs he made your satellites endure;
 " And if to this exchange you should be given,
 " I'll try to coax *our* Cerberus up to heaven."

Here Michael interposed: " Good saint! and devil!
 " Pray not so fast; you both out-run discretion.
 " Saint Peter! you were wont to be more civil:
 " Sathan! excuse this warmth of his expression,
 " And condescension to the vulgar's level:
 " Even saints sometimes forget themselves in session.
 " Have you got more to say?"—" No!"—" If you please,
 " I'll trouble you to call your witnesses."

Then Sathan turn'd and wav'd his swarthy hand,
 Which stirr'd with its electric qualities
 Clouds farther off than we can understand,
 Although we find him sometimes in our skies;
 Infernal thunder shook both sea and land
 In all the planets, and hell's batteries
 Let off the artillery, which Milton mentions
 As one of Sathan's most sublime inventions.

This was a signal unto such damn'd souls
 As have the privilege of their damnation
 Extended far beyond the mere controls
 Of worlds past, present, or to come; no station
 Is theirs particularly in the rolls
 Of hell assigned; but where their inclination
 Or business carries them in search of game,
 They may range freely—being damn'd the same.

They are proud of this—as very well they may,
 It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key
 Stuck in their loins; or like to an “entré”
 Up the back stairs, or such free-masonry:
 I borrow my comparisons from clay,
 Being clay myself. Let not those spirits be
 Offended with such base low likenesses;
 We know their posts are nobler far than these.

When the great signal ran from heaven to hell—
 About ten million times the distance reckon’d
 From our sun to its earth, as we can tell
 How much time it takes up, even to a second,
 For every ray that travels to dispel
 The fogs of London; through which, dimly beacon’d,
 The weathercocks are gilt, some thrice a year,
 If that the *summer* is not too severe:—

I say that I can tell—’twas half a minute;
 I know the solar beams take up more time
 Ere, pack’d up for their journey, they begin it;
 But then their telegraph is less sublime,
 And if they ran a race, they would not win it
 ’Gainst Sathan’s couriers bound for their own clime.
 The sun takes up some years for every ray
 To reach its goal—the devil not half a day.

Upon the verge of space, about the size
 Of half-a-crown, a little speck appear’d,
 (I’ve seen a something like it in the skies
 In the *Ægean*, ere a squall;) it near’d,
 And, growing bigger, took another guise;
 Like an aerial ship it tack’d, and steer’d
 Or *was* steer’d (I am doubtful of the grammar
 Of the last phrase, which makes the stanza stammer;—

But take your choice;) and then it grew a cloud,
 And so it was—a cloud of witnesses.
 But such a cloud! No land ere saw a crowd
 Of locusts numerous as the heavens saw these;
 They shadow’d with their myriads space; their loud
 And varied cries were like those of wild-geese,
 (If nations may be liken’d to a goose)
 And realized the phrase of “hell broke loose.”

Here crash’d a sturdy oath of stout John Bull,
 Who damn’d away his eyes as heretofore:
 There Paddy brogued “by Jasus!”—“What’s your wull?”
 The temperate Scot exclaim’d: the French ghost swore
 In certain terms I sha’nt translate in full,
 As the first coachman will; and midst the war
 The voice of Jonathan was heard to express,
 “Our President is going to war, I guess.”

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane;
 In short, an universal shoal of shades
 From Otaheite's Isle to Salisbury Plain,
 Of all climes and professions, years and trades,
 Ready to swear against the good king's reign,
 Bitter as clubs in cards are against spades:
 All summon'd by this grand "subpœna," to
 Try if kings mayn't be damn'd, like me or you.

When Michael saw this host, he first grew pale,
 As angels can; next, like Italian twilight,
 He turned all colours—as a peacock's tail,
 Or sunset streaming through a Gothic skylight
 In some old abbey, or a trout not stale,
 Or distant lightning on the horizon by night,
 Or a fresh rainbow, or a grand review
 Of thirty regiments in red, green, and blue.

Then he address'd himself to Sathan: "Why—
 "My good old friend, for such I deem you, though
 "Our different parties make us fight so shy,
 "I ne'er mistake you for a *personal* foe;
 "Our difference is *political*, and I
 "Trust that, whatever may occur below,
 "You know my great respect for you; and this
 "Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss—

"Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
 "My call for witnesses? I did not mean
 "That you should half of earth and hell produce;
 "'Tis even superfluous, since two honest, clean,
 "True testimonies are enough: we lose
 "Our time, nay, our eternity, between
 "The accusation and defence: if we
 Hear both, 'twill stretch our immortality."

Sathan replied, "To me the matter is
 "Indifferent, in a personal point of view:
 "I can have fifty better souls than this
 "With far less trouble than we have gone through
 "Already; and I merely argued his
 "Late Majesty of Britain's case with you
 "Upon a point of form: you may dispose
 "Of him; I've kings enough below, God knows!"

Thus spoke the Demon (late call'd "multifaced"
 By multo-scribbling Southey.) "Then we'll call
 "One or two persons of the myriads placed
 "Around our congress, and dispense with all
 "The rest," quoth Michael: "Who may be so graced
 "As to speak first? there's choice enough—who shall
 "It be?" Then Sathan answered, "There are many;
 "But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well as any."

A merry, cock-eyed, curious looking Sprite,
 Upon the instant started from the throng,
 Drest in a fashion now forgotten quite;
 For all the fashions of the flesh stick long
 By the people in the next world; where unite
 All the costumes since Adam's, right or wrong,
 From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat,
 Almost as scanty, of days less remote.

The Spirit look'd around upon the crowds
 Assembled, and exclaim'd, "My friends of all
 "The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst these clouds;
 "So let's to business: why this general call?
 "If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
 "And 'tis for an election that they bawl,
 "Behold a candidate with unturn'd-coat!
 "Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote?"

"Sir," replied Michael, "you mistake: these things
 "Are of a former life, and what we do
 "Above is more august; to judge of kings
 "Is the tribunal met; so now you know."
 "Then I presume those gentlemen with wings,"
 Said Wilkes, "are cherubs; and that soul below
 "Looks much like George the Third; but to my mind
 "A good deal older—Bless me! is he blind?"

"He is what you behold him, and his doom
 "Depends upon his deeds," the Angel said.
 "If you have ought to arraign in him, the tomb
 "Gives licence to the humblest beggar's head
 "To lift itself against the loftiest."—"Some,"
 Said Wilkes, "don't wait to see them laid in lead,
 "For such a liberty—and I, for one,
 "Have told them what I thought beneath the sun."

"Above the sun repeat, then, what thou hast
 "To urge against him," said the Archangel. "Why,"
 Replied the Spirit, "since old scores are past,
 "Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I.
 "Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,
 "With all his Lords and Commons: in the sky
 "I don't like ripping up old stories, since
 "His conduct was but natural in a prince.

"Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
 "A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;
 "But then I blame the man himself much less
 "Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be unwilling
 "To see him punish'd here for their excess,
 "Since they were both damn'd long ago, and still in
 "Their place below; for me I have forgiven,
 "And vote his 'habeas corpus' into heaven,"

"Wilkes," said the Devil, "I understand all this;
 "You turn'd to half a courtier ere you died,
 "And seem to think it would not be amiss
 "To grow a whole on the other side
 "Of Charons ferry; you forget that his
 "Reign is concluded; whatsoe'er betide,
 "He won't be sovereign more: you've lost your labour,
 "For at the best he will but be your neighbour.

"However, I knew what to think of it,
 "When I beheld you in your jesting way
 "Flitting and whispering round about the spit
 "Where Belial, upon duty for the day,
 "With Fox's lard was basting William Pitt,
 "His pupil; I knew what to think, I say:
 "That fellow even in hell breeds farther ills;
 "I'll have him gagg'd—'twas one of his own bills.

"Call Junius!" From the crowd a Shadow stalk'd,
 And at the name there was a general squeeze,
 So that the very ghosts no longer walk'd
 In comfort, at their own aerial ease,
 But were all ramm'd, and jamm'd (but to be balk'd,
 As we shall see) and jostled hands and knees,
 Like wind compress'd and pent within a bladder,
 Or like a human cholic, which is sadder.

The shadow came! a tall, thin, gray-hair'd figure,
 That look'd as it had been a shade on earth;
 Quick in its motions, with an air of vigour,
 But nought to mark its breeding or its birth:
 Now it wax'd little, then again grew bigger,
 With now an air of gloom, or savage mirth;
 But as you gazed upon its features, they
 Changed every instant—to what, none could say.

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less
 Could they distinguish whose the features were;
 The Devil himself seem'd puzzled even to guess;
 They varied like a dream—now here, now there;
 And several people swore from out the press,
 They knew him perfectly; and one could swear
 He was his father; upon which another
 Was sure he was his mother's cousin's brother:

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,
 An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,
 A nabob, a man-midwife; but the wight
 Mysterious changed his countenance at least
 As oft as they their minds: though in full sight
 He stood, the puzzle only was increased;
 The man was a phantasmagoria in
 Himself—he was so volatile and thin!

The moment that you had pronounced him *one*,
 Presto! his face changed, and he was another;
 And when that change was hardly well put on,
 It varied, till I don't think his own mother
 (If that he had a mother) would her son
 Have known, he shifted so from one to t'other,
 Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
 At this epistolary "iron mask."

For sometimes he like Cerberus would seem—
 "Three gentlemen at once," (as sagely says
 Good Mrs. Malaprop;) then you might deem
 That he was not even *one*; now many rays
 Were flashing round him; and now a thick steam
 Hid him from sight—like fogs on London days:
 Now Burke, now Tooke, he grew to people's fancies,
 And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

I've an hypothesis—tis quite my own;
 I never let it out till now, for fear
 Of doing people harm about the throne,
 And injuring some minister or peer
 On whom the stigma might perhaps be blown;
 It is—my gentle public lend thine ear!
 'Tis, that what Junius we are wont to call,
 Was really, truly, nobody at all.

I don't see wherefore letters should not be
 Written without hands, since we daily view
 Them written without heads; and books we see
 Are fill'd as well without the latter too:
 And really till we fix on somebody
 For certain sure to claim them as his due,
 Their author, like the Niger's mouth, will bother
 The world to say if *there* be mouth or author.

"And who and what art thou?" the Archangel said.
 "For *that*, you may consult my title-page,"
 Replied this mighty shadow of a Shade:
 "If I have kept my secret half an age,
 "I scarce shall tell it now."—"Canst thou upbraid,"
 Continued Michael, George Rex, or allege
 "Aught further?" Junius answer'd, "You had better
 "First ask him for *his* answer to my letter:

"My charges upon record will outlast
 "The brass of both his epitaph and tomb."
 "Repent'at thou not," said Michael, "of some past
 "Exaggeration? something which may doom
 "Thyself, if false, as him if true? Thou wast
 "Too bitter—is it not so? in thy gloom
 "Of passion?" "Passion!" cried the Phantom dim,
 "I loved my country, and I hated him.

"What I have written, I have written: let
 "The rest be on his head or mine!" So spoke
 Old "Nominis Umbra;" and while speaking yet,
 Away he melted in celestial smoke.
 Then Sathan said to Michael, "Don't forget
 "To call George Washington, and John Horne Tooke,
 "And Franklin:"—but at this time there was heard
 A cry for room, though not a phantom stirr'd.

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the aid
 Of cherubim appointed to that post,
 The devil Asmodeus to the circle made
 His way, and look'd as if his journey cost
 Some trouble. When his burden down he laid,
 "What's this?" cried Michael; "why, 'tis not a ghost?"
 "I know it," quoth the incubus; "but he
 "Shall be one, if you leave the affair to me.

"Confound the Renegado! I have sprain'd
 "My left wing, he's so heavy; one would think
 "Some of his works about his neck were chain'd.
 "But to the point: while hovering o'er the brink
 "Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rain'd),
 "I saw a taper, far below me, wink,
 "And stooping, caught this fellow at a libel—
 "No less on history than the Holy Bible.

"The former is the devil's scripture, and
 "The latter yours, good Michael; so the affair
 "Belongs to all of us you understand.
 "I snatch'd him up just as you see him there,
 "And brought him off for sentence out of hand:
 "I've scarcely been ten minutes in the air—
 "At least a quarter it can hardly be:
 "I dare say that his wife is still at tea."

Here Sathan said, "I know this man of old,
 "And have expected him for some time here;
 "A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
 "Or more conceited in his petty sphere:
 "But surely it was not worth while to fold
 "Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear!
 "We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
 "With carriage) coming of his own accord.

"But since he's here, let's see what he has done."
 "Done!" cried Asmodeus, "he anticipates
 "The very business you are now upon.
 "And scribbles as if head clerk to the Fates.
 "Who knows to what his ribaldry may run,
 "When such an ass as this, like Balaam's, prates?"
 "Let's hear," quoth Michael, "what he has to say;
 "You know we're bound to that in every way."

Now the Bard, glad to get an audience, which
 By no means often was his case below,
 Began to cough, and hawk, and hem, and pitch
 His voice into that awful note of woe
 To all unhappy hearers within reach
 Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in flow;
 But stuck fast with his first hexameter,
 Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.

But ere the spavin'd dactyls could be spurr'd
 Into recitative, in great dismay
 Both cherubim and seraphim were heard
 To murmur loudly through their long array;
 And Michael rose ere he could get a word
 Of all his founder'd verses under way,
 And cried, "For God's sake stop, my friend! 'twere best—
 "*Non Di, Non homines*—" you know the rest."

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
 Which seem'd to hold all verse in detestation;
 The angels had of course enough of song
 When upon service; and the generation
 Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not long
 Before, to profit by a new occasion;
 The Monarch, mute till then, exclaim'd, "What! what!
 "Pye come again? No more—no more of that!"

The tumult grew, an universal cough
 Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,
 When Castlereagh has been up long enough,
 (Before he was first minister of state,
 I mean—the *slaves hear now*;) some cried "off, off,"
 As at a farce; till grown quite desperate,
 The Bard Saint Peter pray'd to interpose
 (Himself an author) only for his prose.

The varlet was not an ill-favour'd knave;
 A good deal like a vulture in the face,
 With a hook nose and a hawk's eye, which gave
 A smart and sharper looking sort of grace
 To his whole aspect, which, though rather grave,
 Was by no means so ugly as his case;
 But that indeed was hopeless as can be,
 Quite a poetic felony "*de se*."

Then Michael blew his trump, and still'd the noise
 With one still greater, as is yet the mode
 On earth besides; except some grumbling voice,
 Which now and then will make a slight inroad
 Upon decorous silence, few will twice
 Lift up their lungs when fairly overcrow'd;
 And now the Bard could plead his own bad cause,
 With all the attitudes of self-applause.

He said—(I only give the heads)—he said,
 He meant no harm in scribbling; 'twas his way
 Upon all topics; 'twas, besides, his bread,
 Of which he butter'd both sides; 'twould delay
 Too long the assembly (he was pleased to dread)
 And take up rather more time than a day,
 To name his works—he would but cite a few—
 Wat Tyler—Rhymes on Blenheim—Waterloo.

He had written praises of a regicide;
 He had written praises of all kings whatever;
 He had written for republics far and wide,
 And then against them bitterer than ever;
 For pantisocracy he once had cried
 Aloud, a scheme less moral than 'twas clever;
 Then grew a hearty anti-jacobin—
 Had turn'd his coat—and would have turn'd his skin.

He had sung against all battles, and again
 In their high praise and glory; he had call'd
 Reviewing¹ "the ungentle craft," and then
 Become as base a critic as ere crawl'd—
 Fed, paid, and pamper'd by the very men
 By whom his muse and morals had been maul'd:
 He had written much blank verse, and blander prose,
 And more of both than any body knows.

He had written Wesley's life:—here, turning round
 To Sathan, "Sir, I'm ready to write yours,
 "In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,
 "With notes and preface, all that most allures
 "The pious purchaser; and there's no ground
 "For fear, for I can choose my own reviewers:
 "So let me have the proper documents,
 "That I may add you to my other saints."

Sathan bow'd, and was silent. "Well, if you,
 "With amiable modesty, decline
 "My offer, what says Michael? There are few
 "Whose memoirs could be render'd more divine.
 "Mine is a pen of all work; not so new
 "As it was once, but I would make you shine
 "Like your own trumpet; by the way, my own
 "Has more of brass in it, and is as well blown.

"But talking about trumpets, here's my Vision!
 "Now you shall judge, all people; yes, you shall
 "Judge with my judgment! and by my decision
 "Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall!
 "I settle all these things by intuition,
 "Times present, past, to come, heaven, hell, and all,
 "Like King Alfonso²! When I thus see double,
 "I save the Deity some worlds of trouble."

¹ See "Life of H. Kirke White."

² King Alfonso, speaking of the Ptolomean system, said, that "had he been consulted at the creation of the world, he would have spared the Maker some absurdities."

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.: and no
 Persuasion on the part of devils, or saints,
 Or angels, now could stop the torrent; so
 He read the first three lines of the contents;
 But at the fourth, the whole spiritual show
 Had vanish'd, with variety of scents,
 Ambrosial and sulphurous, as they sprang,
 Like lightning, off from his "melodious twang³."

Those grand heroics acted as a spell:
 The angels stopp'd their ears and plied their pinions;
 The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down to hell;
 The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own dominions—
 (For 'tis not yet decided where they dwell,
 And I leave every man to his opinions;)
 Michael took refuge in his trump—but lo!
 His teeth were set on edge, he could not blow!

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known
 For an impetuous saint, upraised his keys,
 And at the fifth line knock'd the Poet down;
 Who fell like Phaeton, but more at ease,
 Into his lake, for there he did not drown,
 A different web being by the Destinies
 Woven for the Laureate's final wreath, when'er
 Reform shall happen either here or there.

He first sunk to the bottom—like his works,
 But soon rose to the surface—like himself;
 For all corrupted things are buoy'd, like corks⁴,
 By their own rottenness, light as an elf,
 Or wisp that flits o'er a morass: he lurks,
 It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf,
 In his own den, to scrawl some "Life" or "Vision,"
 As Wellborn says—"the devil turn'd precisian."

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
 Of this true dream, the telescope is gone
 Which kept my optics free from all delusion,
 And show'd me what I in my turn have shown:
 All I saw farther in the last confusion,
 Was, that King George slipp'd into heaven for one;
 And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
 I left him practising the hundredth psalm.

³ See Aubery's account of the apparition which disappeared "with a curious perfume and a melodious twang;" or see the Antiquary, Vol. I.

⁴ A drowned body lies at the bottom till rotten; it then floats, as most people know.

MR. OWEN TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

AN extraordinary era in the progress of civilization has arrived.

The last half century has produced materials sufficient to effect the most beneficial change in the condition of human society. And the period is at hand when these materials must be so applied by some power, or some party, in this or in some other country.

The subjects of your empire have been chiefly instrumental in discovering the means, by which these materials have been so abundantly produced and made known: and you now possess resources, which, whenever they shall be properly directed, will be found to be inexhaustible.

You are at this moment at the head of the civilized world; and all nations look to you for an example.

There is, however, another country which is following close upon your steps; and if you do not immediately make a proper use of the vantage ground which you at present possess, the high and enviable situation which you have obtained will speedily belong to the New World; and the United States, will, instead of you, become the guide and peaceful ameliorator of all nations.

This comparison between two powers—either of which, through a wise direction, may shortly give laws, not by force, but by wisdom, to every quarter of the world—is not made to excite any jealousy between them, or to arouse any of the degrading feelings which ignorance alone can engender, either in individuals or in states: it is made to rivet the attention of both parties to a subject, calculated to call forth their highest energies, and to unite them as one government and one people, in aiding each other to forward the most important objects that human beings have ever yet sought to accomplish.

No. I wish not to create feelings of division among any portion of my fellow-creatures; but, if possible, to remove that ignorance which is alone the cause of opposition among individuals and nations.

It is for this purpose that I now address myself to you. I know that you are in full possession of all the power requisite to obtain and secure this object: and the reflecting part of society perceive that the mental ignorance with which the world is overwhelmed must be withdrawn as a preliminary measure, before any substantial, permanent, and general improvement can be effected for our species.

Having this great end in view, I do not now address you merely as the directing power of the British empire, but as the legitimate leading head of the civilized world.

And as such, it is not my intention to consider that you will be henceforth influenced by the limited views of class, sect, or party; or even by those of country, climate, or colour. It becomes your duty, as it is your interest, and as it will prove to be your highest happiness, to acknowledge openly, frankly, and honestly, such principles, and to adopt such practices alone as will promote the public good.

On these grounds, it is my duty to speak to you the language of truth only. You are well aware that I have no intention whatever to hurt the feelings of any member of the Government, either in Church or State, or of any parties connected with it; and that I am guided solely by the desire to relieve my fellow-creatures from the miseries with which they have been so long afflicted.

I now state to you—That you, at this moment, possess a sufficient supply of material to enable you, without injury to any parties, to adopt effective measures, which shall relieve the poor and working classes from poverty, or the fear of poverty.

That you possess the most abundant means of relieving all classes from ignorance, and of making them usefully and rationally intelligent.

That you possess ample means to improve to a very great extent, the dispositions, habits, morals, and general conduct of all the present poor and working classes.

And that it entirely depends upon your own measures, whether vice, crimes, and misery, shall continue to abound, as at present; or whether these evils shall be gradually reduced, until they shall be scarcely known in any part of your widely extended dominions.

And first, "That you now possess a sufficient supply of materials to enable you, without injury to any parties, to adopt effective measures, which shall relieve the poor and working classes from poverty, or the fear of poverty."

We know that riches are created solely by the industry of the working classes, and that the more efficiently that industry is directed, the greater is the amount of wealth produced.

We know, too, that the effects of the industry of the working classes may be increased beyond any assignable limit by the aid of mechanical, chemical, and other scientific inventions and discoveries.

Prior to the introduction of these improvements, the manual labour of one man, in many situations, could barely supply common necessities for himself and five or six others. But such inventions and discoveries have been made within the last half century in the most useful of the sciences, that one man can, by his daily labour, now more easily provide the necessities of life for fifty or sixty, than he could for five or six only, fifty years ago.

These scientific improvements, however, have been applied at

random, without foresight and without any general beneficial arrangement or direction. They have been generally applied to create a useless and hurtful superfluity of wealth for a very few, while the great mass of the people have been deprived of the common necessities of life, and grievously injured by them.

These scientific inventions and discoveries have been also greatly limited in number and extent, by reason of the faculties capable of producing them being allowed to remain uncultivated, except in a few instances; and, in consequence, even in great Britain, scientific improvements may still be considered to be only in their infancy: but limited as they yet are, their amount is more than is requisite, under proper direction, to saturate the British empire with wealth beyond the possible use or want of its subjects.

It has been estimated, that fifty years ago, the actual producing power of Great Britain and Ireland did not exceed the unassisted manual labour of fifteen millions of men: it is now estimated to exceed the unassisted manual labour of four hundred millions of men. Its increase, in both islands, proceeds at an average equal to the manual labour of at least six or seven millions of men annually*; and it is most evident to those who are versed in the subject, that it is capable of being made to increase in a continually increasing ratio, and far beyond the possible wants of society, whenever society shall be properly arranged.

The first important defect of the present system is, then, that neither the manual nor scientific power, applicable to the creation of wealth, can be beneficially brought into action: in consequence, pecuniary distress, abject poverty, and the fear of want are unnecessarily allowed to afflict society, while the British Government is in possession of the most ample means to give full and beneficial employment to all its manual and scientific productive powers, so long as poverty or the fear of want shall be experienced by one single individual.

It was stated in the second place, "That the British Government possesses the most abundant means of relieving all classes from ignorance, and of making them usefully and rationally intelligent."

It is evident to every one, that as man is born ignorant, he can be made intelligent by instruction only; and that instruction cannot be given, unless arrangements are devised and executed for that purpose.

These arrangements have not been formed. Partial and imperfect plans to give to a small portion of the people a limited education in a few of the more useful acquirements, are all that now exist even in the British empire and in America.

Nothing has yet been done to relieve the mass of society from

* The annual increase of productive power in Great Britain and Ireland, is thus more than equal to the total amount of manual labour at present employed there, if we suppose that labour unassisted by machinery.

the lowest state of degradation, by instructing men to know themselves; and without this knowledge, the mere acquisition of science is of little comparative value, except for pecuniary purposes.

The facts which the past history of our species presents are now abundantly sufficient to enable you to devise arrangements, by which, with ease and economy, every one of your subjects may be taught to become usefully and rationally intelligent. You, at this moment, have in your hands the power of securing this the greatest of all good immediately, to every individual of the rising generation; to the gradual and certain exclusion of ignorance from your dominions.

Again, "The British Government possesses ample means to improve, to a very great extent, the dispositions, habits, morals, and general conduct of all the present poor and working classes."

It is now known to all reflecting and well-informed persons, that the dispositions, habits, morals, and general conduct of all men, are essentially influenced by the circumstances in which they are placed; that these may be formed to produce, with a few exceptions, the worst dispositions, habits, morals, and general conduct; or, with as few exceptions, the best dispositions, morals, habits, and general conduct.

Now these circumstances are almost all at your command; or may easily be made to be so, to an extent quite sufficient to enable you speedily to improve, most materially, the dispositions, habits, morals, general character, and conduct of all who are under your controul. And the course to adopt in order to effect this important purpose, is simple, open, straight forward, and most easy of execution.

And lastly, I said—"That it entirely depends upon you, whether vice, crime, and misery, shall continue to abound, as at present; or whether, by using the power which you possess for the benefit of all, you shall reduce these evils, until they shall be scarcely known in any part of your widely extended dominions."

It is now too palpable to every one, whose judgment has not been perverted by prejudices early forced into his mind, "that the character of every human being is formed for him at birth, immediately by the Power which creates him, and that this natural character is subsequently modified by each of the circumstances which are permitted to surround him from birth to death."

This is the foundation of all knowledge that can be of any real utility in governing mankind. It can alone direct to any beneficial results. It can alone remove vice, crime, and misery from society. It is the source from whence alone we attain a useful and practical knowledge of the faculties, qualities, and propensities of man,—such a knowledge as shall teach us correctly what man

is, how to cultivate his physical and mental powers in the best manner, and how to secure his permanent happiness; a knowledge, which enables us how to look back upon all the past proceedings of mankind, and minutely to trace all the errors that pervaded them.

This knowledge, however, simple and evident as it is to those who have been enabled to overcome the effects of early imbibed prejudices and errors, has hitherto been hidden from mankind for all useful practical purposes.

The sole cause of this long continued aberration of the human faculties, has been the error of foreing speculative opinions upon the weak and tender infant mind, instead of explaining those incontrovertible facts which experience has discovered to us, and by a knowledge of which alone a sound and correct judgment can ever be formed. Here lies the error of human proceeding. The works of Nature are the direct emanations from the universal creating Power; and the facts which they disclose are, indeed, the words of Deity, unchanging and unchangeable, never to be misunderstood by any one, and spoken alike to all mankind. This is rational; and by this all men and all nations ought to be guided and governed. Until they shall be so guided and governed, no one possessing a knowledge of human nature will expect to see man trained to become a moral, intelligent, and happy being. But who shall break the spell of prejudice and perform the most necessary and important deed that has ever yet been accomplished for man? Who shall relieve him from the ignorance which generates his weakness, his passions, his views, his crimes, and his misery? Who shall enable man to become honest and sincere in his principles and his practices? Who shall destroy all anger in man, and form him into a being universally kind, charitable, and benevolent? You can best do it, and by you it ought to be done.

To attain these great results, you have but to will it, and it is done; enable you, the British Government, to perform this great task; and the time is arrived when it is destined to be accomplished. You possess all that is necessary to say to the world—"Suspend your conflict of opinions and actions; wait with a little patience, and you shall witness the proceedings by which errors in judgment, and errors in practice, shall be gradually and certainly removed from society."

All circumstances have been concurring for a long period past, to declare boldly and openly to the world your intention to speak what you know, and to act consistently with your knowledge; and you will speedily have the whole world to think, to speak, and to act in unison with you. For by speaking your own thoughts, you merely disclose the genuine feelings of human nature, and they will be instantly recognized by every human being.

Then—you know that the infant does not form himself, and can-

not be accountable for the general nature or individual compound of it, which his creator has given him at birth.

Let it not, therefore, be longer said under your public sanction, that human nature is bad by nature, and merits everlasting punishment for its depravity; for it is productive of endless evils in its consequences, and is the first step to derange the human intellect.

You know that the subsequent character of the infant is formed by the hourly circumstances which are permitted to surround him, to act upon his individual nature, and thus to produce the more or less perfect human being.

Let your Government, therefore, henceforward, cease to attempt to direct the conduct of man in opposition to the circumstances which you unwisely permit to exist around him, for they are not in accordance with his nature; and let all your powers be directed to create a new set of circumstances, all of which shall be purposely calculated to be in unison with human nature, and in consequence continually to improve its character and increase its happiness. This, also, is most easy for you to effect in practice.

You know that the will of man is powerless over his own opinions; that it belongs not to his nature to be capable of himself to think that which is impressed upon his mind as true, to be false, or that which he has been made to believe false, to be true. No sincere Christian can, by his own will, make himself believe that Mahomet was a true prophet; or a conscientious Mahomedan convince himself that Christ was the son of God.

Cease, therefore, in your public proceedings to let the world suppose that you have not attained this knowledge. No longer attribute merit, or attach demerit, to the conscientious and unavoidable opinions of any individual; for by so doing you act unjustly, and produce incalculable crime, and consequent misery throughout all society.

You know that it is not the nature of man to like that which is disagreeable to him, or to dislike that which is pleasant to him; that he cannot prefer that which is opposed, to that which is congenial to his nature; in other words, that his sensations are the necessary results of external causes acting on the character which has been given to him. Human nature has not been formed to hate what it believes to be an angel, nor to love what it believes to be a devil.

Cease, therefore, to sanction such practices as pre-suppose that man can like and dislike by the fiat of his own will; for thereby you first implant insincerity in human society, and then throw the minds and actions of men into confusion, sow the seeds of endless crimes, and inflict misery upon almost every human being that comes into existence.

You know that man requires a full supply of the necessaries and comforts of life to render his existence happy.

You know that these are created by the industry of man, aided by mechanic and other scientific powers; and that the amount and quality of such productions depend upon the direction and arrangement of those powers.

You know that circumstances may be so arranged, that the industry of each working individual may be made to produce much for others, and a superfluity for himself; or that he may be allowed to exert the whole of his strength during a long life, and yet produce little for others, and not sufficient for himself.

Let no man, then, henceforward continue to labour in vain in any part of your dominions: it is a direct injury both to the individual and to society; it is the cause of poverty, of much mental and bodily affliction; and it is the source of all crimes relative to property. It is an evil, too, capable of the most easy remedy.

You know that the most probable mode of forming an intelligent, active, virtuous, and happy character in man, is to place him amidst those circumstances which are wisely devised to call forth all the intelligence, useful activity, virtue, and happiness, that his individual nature possesses. And *you know*, that it is irrational to expect more from any being than his nature contains.

Let measures, therefore, be immediately formed to combine such circumstances as shall draw forth all the intelligence, industry, virtue, and happiness contained in the individual natural capacity of each; that those who are immediately under your Government may be an example to all other countries. It is your first duty and your highest interest; it has never been done, and is not at present done in any part of the United Kingdom.

Having stated in detail what you *do know*, and the practice which ought to follow from that knowledge, it is requisite for me to state what you *do not know*; and why, seeing that a rational practice would produce so many important permanent benefits, it has not become general.

You *do not know*, that the earliest taught prejudices of mankind over the world are errors, which preclude the possibility of the human race perceiving the most useful and valuable truths—that they place a strong barrier in the way of the individual knowing what he is, and what his fellow creatures are; and that as long as these prejudices shall prevail, it will be a vain attempt to make man into a rational being, or to establish a moral and virtuous character throughout society.

You *do not know* that a knowledge of the most plain and simple, yet the most important truths cannot be taught to mankind until you determine to change the whole of the present irrational system, by forming a new combination of circumstances, which shall be in accordance with the real nature of man.

You *do not* at present know how to form these circumstances.

In consequence, you are beset with difficulties not to be sur-

mounted under your present system. The progress of knowledge demands equal freedom of opinion upon religious and political subjects.

You know these cannot be permitted, and the errors of the present system be retained.

The progress of knowledge demands, that the representative part of the Government should be fairly and honestly chosen.

You know this cannot be effected, and the errors of the present system be retained.

The progress of knowledge demands, that the existing complicated system of laws, founded in error, and which are become much too expensive to be of service to the poor man, should be simplified, made plain to the understanding, and placed within the reach of all who are to be governed by them.

You know that this is impracticable, so long as the errors of the present system are retained.

The progress of knowledge demands, that the pauper establishment of Great Britain should be annihilated; and the unemployed of the poor and working classes should be so placed and trained, that they may produce abundantly for themselves, and to spare for others what it would be right and beneficial for others to receive from them.

You know this cannot be accomplished, and the errors of the present system be retained.

The progress of knowledge demands, that the manual and scientific powers of society should be fairly brought into action, until all the wants of rational beings shall be fully supplied.

You know that these powers are productive of increased misery only, while the errors of the present system are retained.

The progress of knowledge demands, that justice should be done in the education of each child that comes into existence; and that, for the interest of all, each should be made the best that circumstances can be devised to form him.

You know that this cannot be effected, and the errors of the present system be retained.

The progress of knowledge demands that wars should cease, because war is directly opposed to all the great interests of society—to abundant production, to free distribution, to economical preservation and free enjoyment of wealth—to the formation of kind dispositions, to continued improvement in morals and virtue, to unlimited charity and universal good will among mankind: none of these can be attained while war shall be permitted.

You know that war must continue to be permitted, while the errors of the present system are retained.

The progress of knowledge demands that the cause of ill-will, uncharitableness, and anger, on account of differences of opinion, and of habits among mankind, should for ever be removed.

You know that this cannot be done and the errors of the present system be retained.

The progress of knowledge demands, that as the means abundantly exist to provide amply for the wants of all, competition, opposition, and division of interests, should cease to exist.

You know that these cannot cease while the errors of the present system are retained.

The progress of knowledge demands, that individuals and nations should be sincere, and attempt to discontinue the practice of deception, now when all are conscious that it is deception.

You know that open, honest sincerity, cannot be permitted, if the errors of the present system be retained.

The progress of knowledge demands, that henceforward your councils should be uninfluenced by the prejudices of class, sect, or party; because these lead to lamentable errors in principle, and the most injurious consequences in practice.

You know that this advance in the art of governing cannot be made, and the errors of the present system be retained.

The progress of knowledge demands, that neither mental nor bodily slavery shall be permitted in free states.

You know, that neither physical nor mental freedom can be permitted in any state, where the errors of the present system are retained.

The progress of knowledge peculiarly demands, that the condition of the people of Ireland should be immediately and essentially improved.

You know that this cannot be accomplished, and the errors of the present system be retained. Therefore, the progress of knowledge irresistibly demands, that the errors of the present system should be no longer retained; and that a universal reformation should now be effected in all the existing circumstances of society.

It is natural to enquire how this all important and necessary change can be introduced into practice, without disturbing the present social arrangements of society.

You and you alone possess the power to create this change in a short time, advantageously for yourselves, for every individual in the empire, and for the Governments and people of all other countries.

Instead of supporting the notion of the individual formation of character, which is the fountain of all the errors of the existing system of society throughout the world, you have to declare openly your conviction, that the character of man is formed for him; and, as all facts prove this truth, no one possessing intelligence and experience will attempt to oppose the principle upon which you will thus found your new system.

As the character of man is formed for him, it becomes a primary duty with you to ascertain what are the circumstances within

your empire which the most tend to form an irrational and inferior character among your people. You will speedily discover, that virtuous and moral habits, improved dispositions, and superior physical and mental powers, are not likely to be generally formed amidst such circumstances as are usually found in St. Giles's, Wapping, and similar situations, which now superabound in all the large towns in your dominions; nor yet in the poor Irish peasant's wretched cabin, in and around which, except air and light, scarcely one favourable circumstance exists. As little are they to be met with in the parish pauper establishments within your government.

This knowledge, however, will not lead you prematurely to demolish even these or similar unfortunate circumstances, which might have been permitted to be formed purposely to perpetuate ignorance, poverty, bad dispositions, the worst habits, vice, crime, and misery, from generation to generation.

But it will lead you to consider well of the means, and then judiciously to devise the mode, by which you may build up and combine a new set of circumstances, which shall be as powerful in speedily creating intelligence, industry, good dispositions, good habits, good morals, and happiness, as the existing circumstances are to engender and perpetuate the evils and the miseries of vice.

You possess a vast superfluity of labour, of skill, and of capital, to enable you to accomplish this work; and the application of these three powers to such a purpose would immediately benefit the labourer, the man of skill and science, and the capitalist.

You would thereby create an advantageous activity throughout the nation, which could not fail to produce a beneficial prosperity incapable of retrogression, and certain of extension and increase, until its good effects shall pervade all the ramifications of society.

The details of these measures for ameliorating the general condition of the empire, not by words and much speaking, but by efficient, well devised, practical arrangements, cannot be entered upon in this form of communication, but I am ready to develop them whenever I shall be called upon, without desiring reward of any kind, either from you or from the nation.

And it is for you now to determine, whether this change, the most important that the world has yet known, shall be carried into execution by you and the American Government in perfect unity and harmony, or whether it shall be introduced by the American Government alone, or by individuals under its protection.

I have the honour to be, with all the respect due to your high stations, your faithful subject,

ROBERT OWEN.

New Lanark, Feb. 17, 1824.

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